

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS / CLAIM LISTING

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. ***(Currently Amended)*** A prosthesis to replace all or a portion of a natural facet joint on a vertebra, comprising:
 - a fastening element adapted to be removably attached to the vertebra;
 - a structure ~~removably~~ attached to the fastening element, the structure including a depression sized to accommodate a surgical driving tool; and
 - a prosthetic facet joint articulating surface dimensioned to replace all or a portion of a natural facet joint on the vertebra wherein the prosthetic facet joint articulating surface removably attaches to the structure.
2. ***(Previously Presented)*** A prosthesis according to claim 1 wherein the structure is fixed to the fastening element.
3. ***(Withdrawn)*** A prosthesis according to claim 1 wherein the structure is fixed to the fastening element by an adhesive or cement.
4. ***(Currently Amended)*** A prosthesis according to claim ~~[[1]]~~ 2 wherein the structure is fixed to the fastening element by mechanical attachment.
5. ***(Previously Presented)*** A prosthesis according to claim 1 wherein the prosthetic facet joint articulating surface is removably carried by the fastening element.
6. ***(Previously Presented)*** A prosthesis according to claim 1 wherein the structure is removably attached to the fastening element by frictional engagement.
7. ***(Withdrawn)*** A prosthesis according to claim 1 wherein the structure is removably attached to the fastening element by a Morse taper.

8. ***(Previously Presented)*** A prosthesis according to claim 1 wherein the prosthetic facet joint articulating surface comprises an insert fitted to the structure.

9. ***(Previously Presented)*** A prosthesis according to claim 1 wherein the prosthetic facet joint articulating surface comprises an insert fitted by frictional engagement to the structure.

10. ***(Withdrawn)*** A prosthesis according to claim 1 wherein the artificial facet joint structure comprises an insert fitted by a Morse taper to the fastening element.

11. ***(Previously Presented)*** A prosthesis according to claim 1 wherein the prosthetic facet joint articulating surface comprises a removable insert fitted to the structure.

12. ***(Canceled)***

13. ***(Previously Presented)*** A prosthesis according to claim 1 wherein the prosthetic facet joint articulating surface is adapted and configured to articulate with a portion of a facet joint of an adjoining vertebra.

14. ***(Previously Presented)*** A prosthesis according to claim 1 wherein the prosthetic facet joint articulating surface is adapted and configured to replace a caudal portion of a natural facet joint.

15. ***(Previously Presented)*** A prosthesis according to claim 1 wherein the prosthetic facet joint articulating surface is adapted and configured to replace a caudal portion of a natural facet joint and articulate with a cephalad portion of a facet joint of an adjoining vertebra.

16. ***(Currently Amended)*** A prosthesis according to claim 1 wherein the prosthetic facet joint articulating surface is made of at least one ~~selected~~ prosthetic material selected from the group consisting of polyethylene, rubber, tantalum, titanium, chrome cobalt, surgical steel, bony in-growth material, ceramic, or artificial bone.

17. ***(Canceled)***

18. ***(Previously Presented)*** A prosthesis according to claim 1 wherein the fastening element is fixed to the vertebra by an adhesive or cement.

19. ***(Original)*** A prosthesis according to claim 1 wherein the fastening element includes a bony in-growth material.

20. ***(Withdrawn)*** A method of replacing, on a vertebral body, all or a portion of a natural facet joint using the prosthesis defined in claim 1 to provide improved support for the spinal column, the method comprising the steps of

- (i) removing all or a portion of a natural articular process from the vertebral body, and
- (ii) fixing the prosthesis as defined in claim 1 to the vertebral body to replace the removed portion of the natural articular process with the artificial facet joint structure.

21. ***(Withdrawn)*** A method according to claim 20 further including a step of removing at least some of the lamina from the vertebral body.

22. ***(Withdrawn)*** A method according to claim 20 further including a step of removing at least part of a pedicle from the vertebral body.

23. ***(Previously Presented)*** A prosthesis according to claim 1 wherein the structure is fixed to the prosthetic facet joint articulating surface.

24. ***(Currently Amended)*** A prosthesis according to claim 1 wherein the fastening element is adapted to be removably attached to the vertebra at or near a pedicle.

25. ***(Currently Amended)*** A prosthesis according to claim 1 wherein the fastening element is adapted to be removably attached to the vertebra at a location away from a pedicle.

26. ***(Previously Presented)*** A prosthesis according to claim 1 wherein the prosthetic facet joint articulating surface is adapted and configured to replace a cephalad portion of a natural facet joint.

27. ***(Previously Presented)*** A prosthesis according to claim 1 wherein the prosthetic facet joint articulating surface is adapted and configured to replace a cephalad portion of a natural facet joint and articulate with a caudal portion of a facet joint of an adjoining vertebra.

28. ***(Currently Amended)*** A prosthesis according to claim 1 wherein the fastening element is made of at least one ~~selected~~ prosthetic material selected from the group consisting of polyethylene, rubber, tantalum, titanium, chrome cobalt, surgical steel, bony in-growth material, ceramic, or artificial bone.

29. ***(Canceled)***

30. ***(New)*** A prosthesis according to claim 1 wherein the surgical driving tool comprises a hexagonal driver.